



Annual Report

2014–2015



Australian Government



Queensland Government

Our vision:

Inspired and empowered communities who value our natural assets.

Our mission:

To empower our region with the resources, knowledge and skills to maintain our natural assets for future generations.

Our values:

Empowerment
Integrity
Accountability
Teamwork
Innovation
Passion



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Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated's Annual Report 2014-15 has been prepared with due care and diligence using the best available information at the time of publication. FBA holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions and decisions made by other parties based on this publication.

About Fitzroy Basin Association

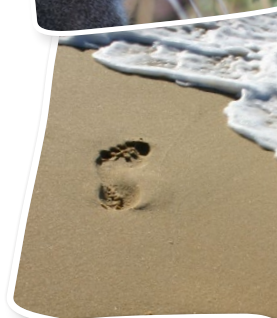
Fitzroy Basin Association Incorporated (FBA) is one of 14 Natural Resource Management regional bodies in Queensland and 56 Australia wide that help communities manage natural resources more wisely. Natural Resource Management is about finding the balance between protecting the environment and land use needs of the community, agriculture and industry.

FBA strives to protect natural assets like habitats and ecosystems, wetlands, plants and animals; improve land condition and land management practices; and ensure that we have healthy waterways flowing to the reef.

At over 156,000 km², The Fitzroy Basin is more than twice the size of Tasmania and the largest Reef catchment. It extends from Nebo in the north to Injune in the south, and west to the Drummond Range. As well as the catchments of the Fitzroy River, our region also covers adjacent coastal waterways and the Boyne and Calliope Rivers.

Fitzroy Basin facts –

- Comprised of over 20,000 kms of waterways, it's the largest catchment draining to the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef lagoon
- Over 80 percent of land is used for grazing
- Around 480,000 ha of land in the Fitzroy Basin is used for farming
- Over 1,400 km² of estuarine coastal wetlands
- Almost 80% of Queensland's coal mines and 60% of coal seam gas wells are located here
- Home to the Fitzroy River and White-Throated Snapping Turtles, Capricorn Yellow Chat, Kroombit Tinker Frog, Snubfin Dolphin, Bridled Nailtail Wallaby, Black Breasted Button Quail and three endemic species of fish





From the Chair

As I look back on the year I take pride in the resilience of our community. It was another tough year for our landholders with dry conditions continuing in the west and widespread destruction caused along the coast and in the lower Fitzroy and Dawson catchments by Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

While recovery from Cyclone Marcia is ongoing we were very pleased to see that our recovery works (supported by FBA through funding from the Queensland Government) after Ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald survived. This was a great achievement for the landholders, FBA and our region's waterways as soil and other farming infrastructure remained on farm.

The Board and I feel incredibly honoured to be part of an organisation making such a positive and significant contribution to the future of our region's natural assets. Through funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments, we are making a positive impact on the future of our landscape and

the environment. Landholders continue to improve their farming practices and adopt best management practices. We also strive to protect our endangered and threatened species, urban waterways and deliver coastal rehabilitation projects.

The launch of our Central Queensland Sustainability Strategy 2030 and our Water Quality Improvement Plan demonstrates FBA's contribution to setting the strategic direction for a sustainable future.

Our Board's focus this year was on reviewing the organisation's strategic plan, mission, vision and values. We did this in consultation with staff to foster closer working relationships and ensure the objectives of the Board were adopted by Board and staff.

Within two years of the Grazing Best Management Practice Program's (BMP) commencement almost 1,000 graziers have completed the program as it continues to expand across Queensland. This time

last year I noted that we'd reached the 100 milestone, so to get to 1,000 in the second year is remarkable and graziers are to be congratulated for their participation. Additionally over 1,000 people stopped at FBA's stall during Beef Week to learn more about the wide variety of work we manage.

As a grazier I believe that without access to ongoing education, benchmarking tools and support to implement practice changes, our agricultural industry will lose momentum. It's comforting to know that groups like FBA exist and their role is highly regarded by our industry, now more than ever. My sincere thanks to all our partners for their passion and commitment. We are also very thankful for the funding we receive from both the Commonwealth and State governments.

I congratulate the team at FBA on a great year and look forward to the year ahead.

Ian MacGibbon





From the CEO

2014–15 has been another outstanding year for FBA and our network of delivery partners, with FBA again exceeding our targets.

Over \$14M was invested in the region in 2014–15 to care for our region's waterways, improve water quality, support best management practices, protect threatened or endangered species and manage feral animals and weeds. I encourage you to take the time to read this report to learn more about our key achievements.

Over the past 12 months, FBA has overseen the development of the of the region's Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP:2015), which will help us target funding to achieve the best possible water quality outcomes. The new plan feeds into the Central Queensland Sustainability Strategy 2030 (CQSS:2030) with both available for public comment via our website. The CQSS:2030 clearly defines a vision for Central Queensland so I encourage you to get online and have your say.

FBA plays a major role in improving the quality of water that reaches the Great Barrier Reef by working alongside producers, industry and government agencies through funding from the Australian and Queensland governments.

With the Reef's long-term health continually in the spotlight, the need for ongoing investment in natural resource management has never been more apparent. FBA and similar regional groups are well positioned to improve the health and resilience of our region's natural assets both now and in the future.

This year the Australian Government announced the National Landcare Programme. Through this programme FBA will work to empower local community groups to complete projects with positive environmental outcomes. FBA is also coordinating a 20 Million Trees project at Mt Etna National Park, with the hope there are many more to come for our region.

Increasing community awareness of natural resource management and sustainability has continued through FLOW, our visitors centre. FLOW is a valued source of information on our region's natural assets and trusted education service. This year FLOW released its second book - 'Dadhim the slightly different looking Dolphin', focusing on the Snubfin Dolphin found in the Fitzroy Delta.

Building and maintaining effective partnerships remains a key focus for FBA. Our delivery partnerships continue to achieve positive outcomes. We also host the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership, Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, Grazing BMP partnership and the Regional Landcare Facilitator. I am grateful to each and every one of our partners and individuals, groups and organisations we have worked with for helping make the year such a success.

Finally to the Staff and Board of FBA, my thanks for all your hard work and outstanding achievements. Your passion and dedication makes my job easier and it is a pleasure to belong to the FBA family.

Paul Birch



2014 – 15 Highlights

\$14 MILLION

was invested in the region to manage natural resources and improve water quality



90 Watering points installed to reduce cattle access to waterways

OVER 620,000

Hectares are directly managed to reduce sediment and erosion, assist flood recovery and reduce weeds and pests



850 FERAL ANIMALS controlled to support protected species

\$2.3 MILLION

invested by land managers in on-ground projects - represents cash, the value of labour and project management



14,000 PEOPLE have visited FLOW Visitor Centres since opening in 2012



39.6ha of urban and coastal weeds treated

ALMOST 1,400

land managers attended best management practice workshops, received training in computer-mapping, GPS and pasture budgeting skills

233 grazing businesses completed

Grazing Best Management Practice modules in the region



OVER 1,000 TREES

and shrubs planted along urban and coastal waterways

OVER 5,000

likes for our Facebook page 'I believe in a sustainable CQ' showcasing FBA's activities



4.5 TONNES of rubbish removed from urban waterways and beaches

122 projects contracted to reduce erosion, improve water quality and assist landholders impacted by flood



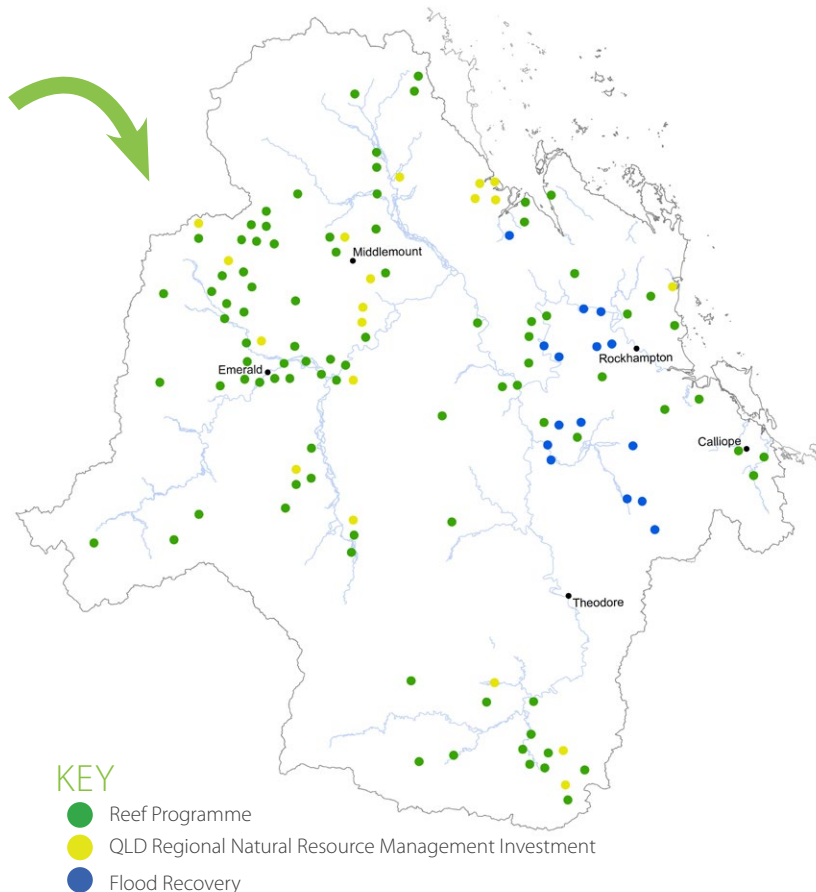
37 Fitzroy River Turtle nests protected during the breeding season

94% of graziers who completed Grazing Best Management Practice Program would recommend it to other graziers

5,018 native seeds collected for propagation for the 20 Million Trees Mt Etna project



151 Kilometres of streams and creeks protected



1,000 People engaged with FBA staff at our Beef Australia stall

How we work



Investment

By sourcing funding from all available avenues to invest in the protection of our natural assets.

Advocacy

By pro-actively engaging and influencing all decision makers on priority regional issues.

Partnerships and Alliances

By identifying and fostering relationships with all levels of government, industry and the community.

Community Engagement

By communicating and connecting with our community stakeholders using mechanisms that are meaningful and relevant to individuals and groups.

Delivery

By working closely with our Partners, to ensure delivery of the latest, innovative, sustainable practices.

Information and Knowledge

By securing current information and knowledge and making it easily and readily available.

Continuous Improvement

By ensuring we constantly review and amend our processes to achieve the best outcomes.

Investment

FBA receives funding through the Australian Government's Reef Programme and National Landcare Programme as well as Queensland Government programs. Combined with significant in-kind funding from landholders and partners over \$21 million has been invested in our region in 2014–15. This investment has had significant outcomes for our region through projects that have:

- Reduced erosion
- Improved water quality
- Supported training and implementation of best management practices
- Cared for wetlands, coastal systems and creeks
- Increased resilience to future flood events
- Protected unique native species
- Controlled feral animals and weeds

FBA prioritised this investment to ensure the best outcomes for our region's natural assets and local water quality and worked with our network of sub regional delivery partners – Central Highlands Regional Resources Planning Cooperative, Dawson Catchments Coordinating Association and Capricornia Catchments, Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee and many others to achieve positive outcomes for our region.

\$14M

Funds invested
in region

\$2.3M

Invested
by landholders

Over \$5M

Invested
by partners

Advocacy

As Central Queensland's lead Natural Resource Management group, FBA advocates to improve the health of our region's natural assets.

Water quality, systems repair, best management practice and biodiversity are a strong focus for our organisation. Our CEO and senior managers regularly attend meetings across the state to ensure our region has a voice in planning and decision making forums for natural resource management.

Funding through the Australian Government's Reef Programme is coming to an end in June 2016. The Australian Government's Reef Trust and Queensland Government's Office of the Great Barrier Reef have been established to target funding to achieve Great Barrier Reef water quality outcomes. If funding is attained through Reef Trust in Phases 3 and 4 for the region it is likely to focus on:

- Improving grazing land management to reduce sediment, nutrients and pesticides to the Reef
- Supporting land manager innovation for improved management practices
- Maintaining water quality improvement momentum in grains, dairy, cotton and horticulture industries

Our team developed a new concept to look at profit, performance and water quality outcomes in grazing and has partnered with North Queensland Dry Tropics to obtain funding in Reef Trust Phase 1.

FBA is striving to ensure the region receives an appropriate level of funding through the Australian Government Reef Trust and Queensland Government Office of the Great Barrier Reef to maintain and improve the standards already established through existing programs.

Partnerships and Alliances

Our Sub Regional Delivery Partners

FBA makes on-ground change happen by working in partnership with our three major delivery partners: Capricornia Catchments Inc., Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperative and Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association.

Australian Government

FBA works with the Australian Government through various funding programmes, including the Reef Programme, National Landcare Programme and one-off grants to achieve long-term sustainability goals.

Queensland Government

Works with Queensland Government to advocate policy and implement environmental outcomes.

Local Government

To provide feedback on planning, deliver projects and raise community awareness.

Landholders

By working directly with farmers and graziers to develop, manage and monitor projects on agricultural land to foster and support best management practices on-farm.

Traditional Owners

By working with Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee to facilitate gatherings between Traditional Owners and encourage involvement in Natural Resource Management activities and knowledge exchange.



Community groups

To complete grass roots natural resource management projects with wide public benefits and build capacity of dedicated volunteers.

Industry groups

Working in partnership with AgForce, Cotton Australia and Growcom on Best Management Practice Programs and Conservation Volunteers Australia and Greening Australia to complete urban and coastal projects.

Natural Resource Management groups

FBA works closely with other regional bodies to progress sustainable environmental outcomes.

Fitzroy Partnership for River Health and Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership

FBA hosts the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health and Gladstone Healthy Partnership. FBA is also a major partner working with leading organisations from mining, energy, agriculture, government, business and community in monitoring alliances to deliver transparent annual report cards on the health of our region's waterways.

Researchers and field experts

To share information and educate our landholders and community.

Primary and high schools

Building capacity by providing on-ground education on environmental values, ecological processes and threats to urban waterways and fostering action.

Through tailored education sessions tied to The Australian Curriculum delivered at FBA's FLOW Visitors Centre. Tours will commence from mid-2015 to regional schools.



Community Engagement

Strong relationships with landholders, community groups and individuals is essential to facilitate positive environmental outcomes and increase community understanding of Natural Resource Management. By maintaining these relationships and seeking new ones, FBA has been able to foster significant community capacity with positive results for the region. Here's a few examples from 2014-15:



Urban waterways

FBA is working with our community to improve the health of priority creeks – Moores Creek in Rockhampton, Fig Tree Creek in Yeppoon and Police and Boat Creeks in Gladstone.

These waterways eventually reach the Great Barrier Reef and were the focus of Clean Up Australia Day activities organised by FBA. An astounding 2.6 tonnes of rubbish was collected in one day. This highlighted the need for an ongoing presence and work in these areas to prevent litter reaching the Reef. At other events held throughout the year, a further tonne (1,000 kg) of rubbish was removed from waterways.

Several groups are actively engaged in caring for these waterways including Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee's Gundoo Junior Rangers, St Brendan's College, Envirolink, Boat Creek Industry Group, Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Wildlife Rockhampton and Bahal Youth.

Collectively these groups have made a significant impact on the health of these waterways. In addition, almost 23 ha of weeds have been treated and 18 ha have benefited from revegetation and earthworks to reduce erosion.

20 Million Trees

Mobilising partners, volunteers and community groups, FBA was able to collect more than 5,000 native seeds for propagation for the 20 Million Trees project at Mt Etna Caves National Park. This project will improve the condition and extent of habitat for threatened plant and animal species.

Coastal and marine

A range of exciting and inspiring events and projects were delivered with the support of various community groups and organisations including Capricorn Coast Landcare, EnviroLink, GenYadaba, Kinka Wetland Working Group, Friends of Lammermoor Native Gardens, BirdLife Capricornia, North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre, Boyne Island Environmental Education Centre, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Surfriders, Gladstone State High School, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services, Livingstone Shire Council and CQUniversity.

Hundreds of community members attended our events such as the Kinka Wetlands Discovery Day, Iwasaki wetland tours and marine debris training workshops. FBA also supported other coastal events including Gladstone's EcoFest and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools' Future Leader Eco Challenge days.

As a result of these and other events supported by FBA over 830 kg of marine debris was removed from beaches, over 10 ha of coastal systems were revegetated and work to reduce erosion and protect sand dune systems was completed.

In a first for our region, we also worked with community members on the Capricorn and Curtis coasts who volunteered their time to conduct marine turtle monitoring. The volunteers gathered data on the quantity and location of turtles nesting on our region's beaches. This data contributed to the development of a Marine Turtle Summary Report for Central Queensland. Volunteers were sourced through coastal community groups and a Facebook post that reached over 13,000 people.



Landholders

A large proportion of our funding supports on-ground projects that achieve positive water quality outcomes and training and development opportunities for graziers and growers. Our achievements through this funding help demonstrate why engaging with landholders is vital to our work. FBA and our sub region delivery partners have strong relationships with landholders in the region and strives to keep them engaged in Natural Resource Management.

Regional Landcare Facilitator

FBA hosts a Regional Landcare Facilitator whose key role is as an enabler, bringing people and information together. Utilising the FBA network of contacts and information, the Regional Landcare Facilitator assists individuals and groups with information and knowledge working towards better landcare, sustainable agriculture and environmental outcomes. During the year the Regional Landcare Facilitator supported 12 community groups to increase awareness and participation in Natural Resource Management and coordinated skills development events attended by 300 people.

FLOW Visitors Centre

Over 14,000 people have visited FBA's visitors centre, FLOW, since it opened in 2012. The team at FLOW are always working on new ideas to promote our region's natural assets and educate our younger generation.

FLOW partnered with a range of local providers, groups and organisations to feature reptiles and animals, museum and local displays, and engaging and interesting speakers.

88 school groups with 1,754 students visited FLOW for tailored education sessions tied to The Australian Curriculum. These sessions offer students a different perspective in an engaging and thought-provoking environmental space and are very popular with teachers.

FLOW also released its second children's book 'Dadhim The Slightly Different Looking Dolphin'. This one features the Snubfin Dolphin, a unique species found in the Fitzroy Delta.



Delivery

By working with our extensive network of partners we have delivered positive environmental outcomes for our region. On-ground delivery in the region of projects and activities provided a great range of success stories including:

Improving land condition and water quality

88 landholders worked with FBA to complete on-ground projects through funding from the Australian Government's Reef Programme.

A stringent process is followed by FBA in the selection and delivery of projects to encourage practice change across the whole of property as well as long term outcomes.

Training and extension activities continued throughout the region for graziers, farmers and cotton growers to build capacity and share knowledge. In total, over 900 landholders attended training sessions delivered by FBA staff and contractors through the Australian Government's Reef Programme and National Landcare Programme (Sustainable Agriculture component) as well as Queensland Government funding. Due to Cyclone Marcia, our horticulture growers were unable to attend training.

FBA continued our grazing reimbursement scheme for approved training that benefits water quality. Most of the

training had a focus on improving profitability and/or productivity in a sustainable way.

Graziers and grain growers achieving best practice standards also had the opportunity to trial innovative technology and management practices through funding from the Queensland Government with two properties to be used as demonstration sites.

Grain growers who met the objectives of the Reef Programme after completing Grains BMP received specialist assistance through Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. In addition, two growers received pesticide use efficiency training. Cotton growers also benefited from a soil health workshop organised through Blue Dog Agribusiness in the Central Highlands.

FBA also worked with landholders on the Fitzroy floodplain to improve fish habitat and connectivity in the lower Fitzroy. These landholders have undertaken numerous projects on their properties including the control of weeds and the installation of riparian fencing and watering points.





Better Management through BMP

Landholders in the region were offered the opportunity and encouraged to take part in voluntary best management practice (BMP) programs for the grazing, grains, cotton and horticulture industries. BMP allows landholders to self-assess their business against standards developed by the industry and determine if there are any areas for improvement. 335 businesses took part in BMP programs this year, with 233 from the grazing industry.

Grazing BMP is the newest of the three programs and commenced rollout of all five modules in July 2013. Since then, almost 1,000 grazing enterprises have participated in the programmes as it expanded across the state. Grazing BMP was developed in partnership between FBA, AgForce and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. It is funded by the Australian and Queensland governments to support ongoing reef water quality improvements.

The Grazing BMP Program incorporates five modules — Animal Health and Welfare, Animal Production, Grazing Land Management, Soil Health and People and Business. In 2014–15 over 700 modules were completed in our region, with 1,452 modules completed in total across the Fitzroy, Burdekin, Burnett and South East Queensland catchments.

In a recent external survey of 70 Grazing BMP participants

97%

said they had made at least one change to their grazing business following grazing BMP

Building resilience to future flood events

In January 2013, excessive rain from ex-tropical Cyclone Oswald — 800 millimetres in 20 hours — triggered massive flooding in areas, higher than previously seen. The rain event caused major structural damage to fencing and water infrastructure, as well as land degradation through erosion.

FBA received funding through the Queensland Government to work with affected landholders. FBA once again used a prioritisation process to identify hardest hit areas and select projects that achieved the best landscape outcomes. Soil conservation experts were also contracted to provide specialist advice to landholders.

100 properties were assisted and recovery works included:



Gully stabilisation
and soil conservation

6629ha



Streambank stabilisation
and riparian restoration

192km



Farm infrastructure fences

84km



Watering points restored

47

A video highlighting some of our landholders' achievements through the program is available to view on FBA's website and YouTube channel.

Partnering for species conservation

FBA managed a number of programs to care for threatened and endangered species in the region. The biggest threat our native species face is from feral animals and weed incursion. Over the past year, FBA has coordinated:

- a regional baiting project covering 105,000 ha — working with 14 stakeholders including landholders, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Central Highlands Regional Council for more consistent and effective control of wild dogs, one of the Bridled Nailtail Wallaby's major predators
- 11.5 ha of biocontrol of *Harrisia* cactus over two properties for Yellow Chat conservation in partnership with CQUniversity and BirdLife Capricornia
- 290 ha of feral fox control to protect Black Breasted Button Quail, international migratory bird species and other small native wildlife within beach scrub in partnership with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services
- Monitoring and protection of 37 Fitzroy River Turtle nests along the Fitzroy River system to increase their chances of survival in partnership with Greening Australia.



Information & Knowledge

Sharing current information and knowledge with landholders and our community is an essential part of FBA's work. We achieve this via workshops, field days, one-on-one property visits and community events. Our website, newsletter and social media channels are also key methods of communication used to make knowledge and information easy to access and readily available.

As the region's lead Natural Resource Management group, part of our role is to develop, oversee and manage long-term strategies and plans for the preservation of our region's natural assets.

FBA has worked with researchers and experts to develop the Region's Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP:2015). This plan will provide exceptional detail, presented via the web, allowing it to be updated as new data sets become available, ensuring information is timely and accurate.

The Central Queensland Sustainability Strategy 2030 has also been developed by FBA recently and draws the best available knowledge together in one place to provide a blueprint for how we can work together to better manage our natural assets.

Both are available for public comment and can be viewed at **fba.org.au** or **cqss2030.com.au**

Continuous Improvement

As a not-for-profit organisation, FBA is always looking for ways to work smarter and has achieved this in numerous ways this year. One of the most interesting ways was through utilising new technology to refine the project mapping process. Previously field officers would hand draw project sites on paper maps then send them through for digitising. The whole process could take more than a week before accurate project maps were available for use.

Now, with the use of an electronic tablet, field officers are able to input project data and access instant and accurate property information. Datasets are automatically updated whenever the field officer has access to Wi-Fi and requires only quality assurance checks from FBA's GIS Officer.

Previously the mapping database for the whole region was updated every three to six months and was a time consuming task taking over a week to compile. This has streamlined our data processes and made reporting easier. As a result of the new technology, compiling the information required for project reporting takes one to two days! The process saves time, money and provides instant access to accurate data.



Financials

Statement of Financial Position

For year ended 30 June 2015

Current Assets	2015	2014
Cash on hand	\$9,598,154	\$8,322,516
Accounts receivable and other debtors	\$1,893,376	\$240,032
Total Current Assets	\$11,491,530	\$8,562,548
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	\$188,894	\$276,019
Total Non-current Assets	\$188,894	\$276,019
TOTAL ASSETS	\$11,680,424	\$8,838,567
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and other payables (inc. grants)	\$8,589,683	\$5,901,865
Employee provisions	\$508,268	\$373,278
Total current liabilities	\$9,097,951	\$6,275,143
Non-current Liabilities		
Provisions	\$107,355	\$89,151
Total non-current liabilities	\$107,355	\$89,151
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$9,205,306	\$6,364,294
Net Assets	\$2,475,118	\$2,474,273
Equity		
Retained surplus	\$2,475,118	\$2,474,273
TOTAL EQUITY	\$2,475,118	\$2,474,273

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For year ended 30 June 2015

	2015	2014
Revenue	\$14,092,739	\$15,123,048
Employee expenses	\$3,069,815	\$2,957,658
Depreciation expense	\$94,402	\$157,679
Project expenses	\$10,543,704	\$11,053,101
Sundry expenses	\$383,973	\$431,627
Net current year surplus	\$845	\$522,983

This is an abridged version. A full copy of the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2015 is available by contacting:
(07) 4999 2800 | admin@fba.org.au

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